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RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1717  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1591  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1721  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0358  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0993  
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RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4196  
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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2211  
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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E.LOKEN AND L.DOBINS  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2012

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SUBJECT: IBBO MANDAZA ON MUGABE, ZANU-PF'S NEXT STEPS

REF: HARARE 795

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Glenn Warren under 1.4 d

¶1. (C) ZANU-PF insider and Solomon Mujuru confidante Ibbo Mandaza met with polecon chief on September 25 and discussed President Robert Mugabe's health and the state of ZANU-PF.

¶2. (C) Confirming Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono's comments (Reftel), Mandaza said Mugabe's Malaysian physician is now residing in Harare to treat Mugabe for cancer and had advised him to step down. Mandaza believed that Mugabe had had throat cancer and was now suffering from prostate cancer.

¶3. (C) Mandaza said the ZANU-PF politburo had met on September 5 and agreed to call an Extraordinary Congress for the second week of December. There would be no meetings of either the Politburo or Central Committee before that time. The Congress, according to Mandaza, would last one day and would deal with only one issue--succession.

¶4. (C) Mandaza said he had spoken with Mujuru two days before our conversation. Mujuru was organizing his supporters in the provinces to present a challenge to Mugabe. The hope was to convince Mugabe before the Congress that he could not prevail in order to force him to step down. Mandaza was confident that in the hypothetical event of a secret ballot at the Congress, Mugabe could be roundly

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defeated. Since there would not be a secret ballot, it was too early to know how events would play out. Mandaza emphasized that Mujuru wanted Mugabe to go, whether he was replaced by Mujuru's wife, Joice, or someone else loyal to him.

¶ 15. (C) Mandaza believed that even if Mugabe did not have the votes for an endorsement at the Congress, he might continue to fight for it. This raised the possibility of a particularly tumultuous Congress. In general, according to Mandaza, ZANU-PF was in disarray. Mnangagwa believed he now had Mugabe's backing, Mujuru was fighting Mugabe in an attempt to control succession, and most of ZANU-PF just wanted Mugabe to go.

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Bio Note  
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¶ 16. (U) Ibbo Mandaza is the Executive Director of the Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust. SAPES Trust was founded in 1987 to promote dialogue and engage in policy research in Southern Africa.

¶ 17. (U) Mandaza has a B.A. and BSc honors degree in Political Science from the University of Zimbabwe and a PhD from the University of York. As a member of government, he served as Permanent Secretary in the then Ministry of Manpower, Planning and Development; and also served as Vice-Chairman of the Public Services Commission. Mandaza was the founding member and chief executive of the The Mirror Newspaper Group. After the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) gained a controlling interest, it fired him and booted him off the board in 2005. (The Mirror has since shut down.)

¶ 18. (U) Mandaza wrote the forward to "A Lifetime of Struggle," a biography published this year of nationalist leader and former ZANU-PF secretary-general Edgar Tekere which criticized Mugabe and called into question his

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liberation credentials.

¶ 19. (U) Mandaza is a long-time ZANU-PF stalwart. He is now a confidante of, and advisor to, Solomon Mujuru. He has called publicly for Mugabe to leave office, stating that economic reform cannot take place until Mugabe goes.

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Comment  
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¶ 10. (C) Mandaza is a public voice of Solomon Mujuru. He is convinced Mugabe will leave office soon; the question is when. In June, Mandaza predicted Mugabe would be gone by September. He now thinks it could be before the December Congress or early next year. Regardless of Mandanza's skill as a prognosticator, he opens a window on to ZANU-PF which, despite the control Mugabe is still able to exert, is a party in disarray.

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